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RHMCSUU/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
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SUBJECT: PRT BAMYAN: BAMYAN ECONOMIC INITIATIVES RECEIVE  
SUPPORT

#### Summary

1. (U) Bamyana Chamber of Commerce is making strides as private sector advocates, thanks to assistance and guidance from the Afghanistan International Chamber of Commerce (AICC) and the Center for Private Enterprise (CIPE). AICC, recognizing the Chamber's potential even with its current weaknesses (difficulty translating its vision into an action plan), has agreed to open a local AICC office, possibly as early as November. They have also offered to provide training in business development for women and high school students. End Summary.

#### Bamyan Chamber Evolves

2. (U) Over the last several months the Afghanistan International Chamber of Commerce (AICC) and the Center for Private Enterprise (CIPE) have been working with the Bamyan Chamber of Commerce to develop its skills as a private sector advocate. In March 2006, CIPE explained to the Bamyan Chamber how it could help the Chamber develop expertise in strategic planning, business association development, and women's enterprise development. The AICC then organized a National Business Agenda meeting in Bamyan in April 2006, which brought together almost 200 civic and business leaders from Bamyan Province to gauge what matters most to them (Note: This was done in several provinces and the input was used to create the National Business Plan, which identifies common problems and suggests solutions for business people and the Central Government). AICC thereafter held a three-day workshop at the end of May 2006 and gave the Bamyan Chamber advice on advocacy, strategic planning, membership development, marketing, and advocacy. With that training under its belt, the Chamber decided to cast its lot with AICC, with the idea of creating a local chapter of AICC in Bamyan.

3. (U) On September 10, the AICC made a follow up visit to Bamyan to meet with the Bamyan Chamber of Commerce Board of

Directors and together they decided to create a local chapter of the AICC. The Board of the Bamyan Chamber of Commerce selected Ali Akber Eklaqi to be the interim chairman, Haji Mir Alam to be the interim vice-chairman, and the Bamyan Chamber of Commerce Chairman Haj Chaman Ali to be its Advisor. They also selected a site for the new chapter and hope to have a formal opening in early November.

Vision for the Future: Women,s Business and High School Entrepreneurship  
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14. (U) In addition to meeting with the Bamyan Chamber, Christina Grecu of CIPE met with Fatima Kazimeyan, Director of the Department of Women,s Affairs. They discussed CIPE,s willingness to help establish an Afghan Business Women,s Association here in Bamyan. (Note: In Bamyan center there is currently only one female shopkeeper, but many women in the province are very active in handicraft production and rug weaving, both of which typically are done from home.) Grecu offered to return to Bamyan to explain to any interested women how such an association would benefit them. She also proposed arranging a training program for the women on how to prepare a business plan, market their goods and access customers. Kazimeyan asked about other types of training and it was agreed that Grecu would provide her with a list of the different types of programs CIPE could offer. Kazimeyan agreed to examine the list and solicit input from the Bamyan women to identify programs of interest.

15. (U) The CIPE folks also met with the Bamyan Director of the Department of Education to discuss offering a program on entrepreneurship for high school students. CIPE,s &Tashaboz8 program involves training teachers to teach

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basic entrepreneurship concepts to students and put together entrepreneurship manuals. The Director provided a letter of support for this program and two high schools in the province have made commitments to join the program. The CIPE folks hope to bring a trainer from Kabul to instruct the Bamyan teachers and they hope to commence in November in order to complete the training before schools reopen in March.

Comment  
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16. (SBU) Continued support and guidance from AICC and CIPE is a most welcome development since it will be crucial in boosting the Chamber,s advancement of Bamyan,s nascent private sector while reining in unrealistic expectations of what the Chamber, and the province, can achieve in the short term. Their offer to assist women and high school students in business development is also a wonderful opportunity for the province, since these two often overlooked groups are eager to acquire business skills.  
NORLAND